



## Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee

8 May 2019

**Title**

**Family Services Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2018/19**

**Report of**

Chairman of the Committee, Councillor David Longstaff

**Wards**

All

**Status**

Public

**Urgent**

No

**Key**

No

**Enclosures**

Appendix A: Family Services Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2018/19  
Appendix B: Statistics

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### Summary

This report provides an overview of the complaints and compliments received in Family Services in the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.

It reflects the progress that the service has made in how complaints can be used to learn and improve service delivery.

Appendix B includes statistical data, commentary about the types of complaints and any trends, progress made since the last report and areas for further development.

## **Officers Recommendations**

1. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee note the report and Appendices A and B.

### **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

- 1.1 This report is needed to report on complaints made about Family Services and its response. This report also gives Committee members an update on improvements made during 2018/19 and the next steps proposed during 2019/20 to enable the continual improvement of services in line with customer feedback and to reduce the likelihood of complaints arising.

### **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the contents of the reports be noted, especially in terms of complaints processed under The Children Act 1989. This is to ensure that there is sufficient senior oversight and scrutiny of the way complaints are managed and learnt from.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

- 3.1 N/A.

### **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 Following the decision, the service will continue to use complaints to inform service improvement and further engage with young people to ensure they have access to the complaints process.

### **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

#### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

Responding appropriately to and learning from complaints made in relation to children's services contributes to the Corporate Plan priority 'Improving Services for Children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything that we do' as well as our commitment to excellent Customer Care by listening to, and learning from feedback.

#### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However there is a

cost associated with Stage 2 complaint investigations, which have increased during this reporting period, and will increase again in the next reporting period. This pressure was managed within Children Services overall resources. Complaints and compliments play a key part in driving service improvement and contribute to delivering services effectively to get value for money for residents.

### **5.3 Social Value**

Insight and information gained through complaints will contribute to the development of Family Services and the journey of service improvement. This will provide social value to the families that we support.

### **5.4 Legal and Constitutional References**

5.4.1 The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. This lays out a clear legal process for complaints made in relation to any decision made under the Children Act i.e. any child or family receiving social care, and referred to as 'Statutory Complaints' in the attached appendices.

5.4.2 All other complaints are dealt with in accordance with Barnet's Corporate Complaints procedure – referred to as 'Service Complaints' in the attached appendices

5.4.3 As outlined in Article 7 of the Council's Constitution's Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships, the Committee's responsibilities includes:

- all matters relating to children, schools, and education
- to receive reports on relevant performance information on Delivery Units providing services under the remit of the Committee

### **5.5 Risk Management**

5.5.1 Failure to investigate and deal with our residents' complaints in a transparent and timely manner risks legal challenge and loss of confidence by our residents, as well as presenting a reputational risk. It also reduces opportunities to learn from complaints to improve services and to put plans in place to pro-actively reduce the likelihood of future complaints.

### **5.6 Equalities and Diversity**

5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

Our procedures ensure compliance with the council's equality policies and Strategic Equalities Objective

The main objectives of the complaints procedure are to:

- recognise the rights of all service users to make complaints and representations and to have their views considered within a clear procedure as defined by law;
- ensure that council staff and all partner organisations work together so that every child or family facing problems and challenges, who wishes to make a complaint or representation, is well supported in reaching a satisfactory resolution
- make the complaints process more accessible to people who may not have easy access to information online. A new leaflet has been developed to support this.

## **5.7 Corporate Parenting**

5.7.1 The corporate parenting principles are seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, which are outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

5.7.2 The Complaints Team process complaints under the Children Act 1989 and Council's Complaints Procedure. The Team recognise their role as corporate parents, and take into account the corporate parenting principles when exercising their functions as follows:

- providing a clear and easy to access complaints procedure
- ensuring children and young people are made aware of their rights under the Children's Act through service promotional materials
- providing a range of means by which children and young people can express their views, wishes and feelings at every stage of the complaints process, such as by telephone, email or in writing
- sharing quarterly complaints reports with Team Manager and Heads of services to help children's views be taken into account and services delivered which meet their needs
- Providing challenge and following up complaint responses to ensure young people receive responses with timescales as much as possible

Through these processes, the Complaints Team espouse the corporate parenting principles and provide services and support to children and young people through the lens of what a reasonable parent would do to support their own children.

## **5.8 Consultation and Engagement**

5.8.1 The Complaints Officer consulted with managers from teams across Family Services, and has links with complaints Officer from other London Boroughs.

## 5.9 **Insight**

- 5.9.1 The Complaints Team analyse data on a quarterly basis and produce a report which is distributed to senior managers across Family Services. Team Managers and Senior Managers are made aware of all complaints and compliments received for their service. The Complaints Team work alongside the Service User Engagement Group to identify trends and action points to drive improvement based on client feedback. The Complaints Team also attend the Business Management Meetings on a monthly basis.

## 6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Family Services Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2017/18

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=697&MId=9468&Ver=4>